



Labyrinth Network Northwest News

This is The Labyrinth Society 14th Annual Gathering Special Edition of the LNN Newsletter for 2012 comprised of the TLS Gathering Reflections of Christiana Brinton, Kay Kinneavy and Jodi Lorimer, the three LNN Circle Committee members who attended the Gathering

Photos contributed by [Lars Howlett](#) and [Jodi Lorimer](#)



The LABYRINTH SOCIETY 14TH ANNUAL GATHERING October 12-14, 2012 Hudson, WI

Christiana's Reflections: Kay and I arrived on Wednesday, Oct 10th to attend the TLS Board Meeting the next day as we were both being nominated for positions. I'd never attended any of the meetings at other Gatherings before and it was very insightful. There were a number of new board members nominated this year and it looked like a good bunch of dedicated labyrinthines.

Jodi, Kay and I all stayed together in the same room at the YMCA Camp. The building we stayed in was a new building so it was clean and the common room was very comfortable with a kitchenette, fireplace and wood to burn just outside the door.



Those with cars bought snacks and wine so this was the place to be at night during the Gathering. I wasn't feeling so great when I got there, but just being with other like-minded labyrinth-oriented people and sharing a room with two friends whom I never get to spend this much focused time with was worth the lumpy pillows and thin blankets.



The TLS Marketplace was in the registration hall this year and, while there seemed to be fewer vendors, what was there was worthwhile buying. Between Jodi and me, we sold the entire supply of LNN bags and suncatchers which we were very proud of but, in truth, the suncatchers are always a big hit.

The best part of any Gathering is always the people and there were lots of new faces from all over including Tony Christie, a lovely Irishman, whose shamrock lawn labyrinth and Labyrinth Wisdom Cards were a big hit (*see LNN's regular online fall newsletter for a featured article about Tony.*) I loved walking the other temporary and canvas labyrinths laid out all over the campus especially Stephen Shibley and Haskel Straus's meandering labyrinth and the canvas replica of the labyrinth in the floor of Riverside Church in NYC.





This labyrinth was downstairs from the main conference room where there was a huge fireplace and two rooms used by the healers who were on site during the Gathering. Because I came there somewhat under the weather I took advantage of both the Thai Body Massage practitioner and the John of God Crystal Healing Bed that Nona

Bock set up in one of the rooms. Both were excellent, but the crystal healing bed was amazing. It's not something I've ever taken advantage of at any of the other Gatherings, but I am sure glad they were on hand at this one!



The opening ceremony was a highlight of the Gathering. Lisa invited some Ojibway-Netlake elders to officiate and three generations of women showed up to offer us their sacred Water Ceremony. Dorene Day of the Three Fires Society, Keeper of the Healing the Water Songs offered a

blessing while her daughters and granddaughter helped with the singing and the passing out of the water. Her adorable seven year old granddaughter played the rain stick during the ceremony. "This is a First Nation tradition of welcoming guests to their land, asking Spirit to guide the Gathering, and praying for the well being of all life for generations to come." We all stood in a circle around them as they spoke in their native language offering prayers and singing. I was determined to remember the one lovely phrase they kept repeating that meant



something about crossing the river, but wasn't at all successful. There was another piece to the opening ceremony, the St Croix Suite, but I didn't hear anyone tell us to go to another room for this and so I followed the throng out of the building to Jeff Saward's keynote presentation in the main conference room.

I attended a few of the workshops including Jill Geoffrion's, Jodi Lorimer's and Tanya Bailey's *Equanimity*, the pre-Gathering workshop with horses



and an equine labyrinth. Jill's power point presentation of her ministry in Africa and Myanmar was lovely and humbling. Her photos are top notch and her work in these countries awe inspiring. One thing she said made a big impression on me. She said that, as facilitators, we tell people to walk at their own pace, to go around people who are walking more slowly if

necessary. But one day a young man and his brother, victims of the genocide in their country, came and walked the labyrinth together, one following closely behind the other going in and coming out. When they'd both come out the one man told Jill that he'd walked behind his brother out of respect; that walking at his brother's pace was his way of honoring his brother. I told this story to the women inmates at Coffee Creek during the labyrinth walk I helped facilitate when I got back to Portland. They very much appreciated the story.

Jodi's workshop was very interesting as usual. She is always very well prepared and does an excellent job with her power point presentation. I learned a lot about the first known labyrinths and was reacquainted with information I'd forgotten over the years.



Tanya Bailey's hands-on equine labyrinth experience was a hoot. I loved Ben and Cordelia's equine labyrinth show in New Harmony, it was spectacular, and there were aspects of Tanya's that were similar, but the chance to actually bond with a horse by leading him or her around

the design painted on the grass was really special. The weather was perfect. There were novices as well as seasoned horse people in the group. I was somewhere in the middle I guess, but took my cue from Cordelia, who was there, as she led her horse around and so I copied her use of a short lead while talking to my equine buddy consistently the entire walk. There were three horses to choose from and they all just wanted to put their heads down and eat grass, even if it had paint on it. I made a bargain with mine, “you do as I ask going in and I’ll let you eat in the middle.” That seemed to work fairly well. There were a few people who had a hard time getting their horses to do anything other than eat, but even these determined souls had nothing but glowing things to say afterwards. The give and take between horse and walker that we all experienced was uplifting and proved the labyrinth’s value as a teaching and training tool.



All in all a good time and valuable experience, and some great news: the [2013 TLS Gathering](#)’s in our stomping ground, Victoria Island, BC! Road trip!!!

Kay’s Reflections: This was my first big outing since my automobile accident. After 2 months of solitary confinement, I was extremely excited to be doing something other than visits to my doctor and chiropractor. What a joy it was for me to be with a group of labyrinth enthusiasts sharing ideas, sharing meals, participating in ceremonies, workshops, lectures, marketplace, etc. I enjoyed Camp St. Croix even with the slippery mattress and no fitted sheets because it was an opportunity to enjoy the autumn beauty of nature as I walked across the field from my bed to the dining hall.



This year’s featured speakers, Jeff Saward, Lauren Artress, and Jill Geoffrion, all gave excellent presentations. For me, this was the best part of the whole gathering.

My workshops were eye-opening: Lars Howlett gave a beautiful slide presentation about his experiences searching for ancient labyrinths on the Swedish Isle of Gotland, Janice Lewis presented her reflections on the Enneagram and the Labyrinth, and a panel of TLS leaders led a discussion about Labyrinth Research. My most unusual experience was Holly Carnegie Letcher's workshop about Laughter and Labyrinths. Laughter Yoga was a whole new experience for me, and I enjoyed trying it.



Pre-gathering, I heard Jeff Saward's presentation at the Carondelet Center in St. Paul about Labyrinths in America and had the opportunity to walk the Dromenon, possibly the oldest existing cloth labyrinth in the world.



Post-gathering, I attended a workshop at the home of Lisa Moriarty where there are 13 permanent labyrinths. Kimberly Saward joined Lisa for the presentation which used the Man in the Maze pattern interpreted as The Woman at the Well Labyrinth.

I came home with lots of new ideas for future LNN events and names of people whom I would like to invite to the Northwest so you can hear what they have to say.

Jodi's Reflections: We were told repeatedly by the locals that we had JUST missed the glorious fall colors but there were still plenty of prismatic trees to grace the grounds. Steven made the most of them by constructing an amazing labyrinth in and around large trees on the campus. Everywhere



Carol Maurer went for the first day, she was knitting a long piece of pink and purple that appeared the next day as a brilliant knitbomb labyrinth. Nearby was the St. Croix River, a steep climb down and much steeper one coming up but a gorgeous and peaceful spot to visit. Having crowds of YMCA campers share the space and cafeteria was a bit of a distraction to those of us more meditative types but we had plenty of options for quiet times.



After the opening ceremony many gathered in a lovely wood-paneled room for the St. Croix Suite performed by Carol Caouette and Laurie Allmann and a tribute video of the St Croix River in all seasons. I'm fairly certain that Lisa Moriarty spend many a chilly hour lovingly photographing the dramatic ice

floes on the river as well as the beautiful summer shots.

As always, this was a reunion of old friends and the creation of new ones. Vanessa Compton has begun a new business called the Labyrinth Keepers Companion that helps people create events using labyrinths. The Bridget Center, founded in a darling old church in Kewaskum, WA provides a natural sanctuary and place for personal and planetary healing. Many wonderful connections and forward-looking plans made, especially since next year it will be in our corner of the country.



Lauren Artress presented a fascinating workshop on ‘Spiritual but not Religious’, beginning by presenting two studies 10 years apart asking people if they were members of an organized religious group or if they felt themselves to be spiritual in a different sense. We all got on the stage and chose one side



or the other, as well as places along that spectrum, to illustrate how we were raised as children. The much larger group assembled on the ‘organized religion’ side. She interviewed each of us briefly about our childhood experiences then asked us to move to the location that most reflected our beliefs today as adults. Again we each expressed our feelings and were impressed to find that we reflected the studies’ results of moving largely away from organized religious groups to a more open expression and embracing of the spiritual.



I was honored to be selected to present my interpretation of the Biography of the Minotaur, a brief encapsulation of the ancient history of the Bull God and his relationship to the fundamental ideas of sacrifice at the center of the labyrinth. I too attended the Equinimity workshop and was chosen by Dancer, a lovely creature who nestled her face on

my chest and was a delightful companion through the twists and turns of the labyrinth. I never knew horses could be snuggly! She and I had a fascinating conversation throughout, determining just which way we were going to go and coming to a general agreement.

One evening, during the poster presentations (a new opportunity to talk one-on-one with people involved in different personal projects), four crystal bowls were available along with a small labyrinth. Not having had much experience with the bowls, I was absolutely transported by their combined sound that resonated through my body. (Tony Christie assured me my bowl wasn't broken, since I couldn't make a sound – I just needed practice.)

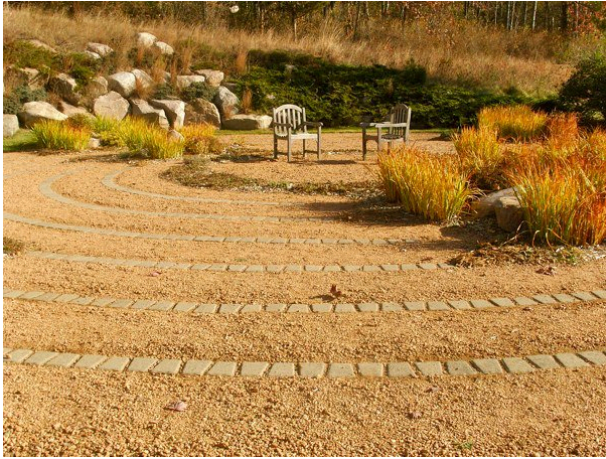


The suggestion was made to put one in the center and a number of us lay with our heads next to it while it was played. Wow. We were all hovering a bit above the labyrinth I'm sure, when the music stopped.

On Sunday I went on a tour of three local labyrinths at the Presbyterian Church, the Caminito Art Studio, and the Jayne Bachman Linger Longer Labyrinth, built in the garden of a local hospital. I was deeply impressed by a presentation describing the design of the hospital, how very quiet it was, how patient and family friendly, the abundance of art everywhere and the restful atmosphere. In short, how un-hospital-like it felt.



We talked with one of the volunteers who offers energy healings and reported how much more quickly people recovered; their pain lessened and their discharge sooner after this treatment. Susan Murphy and I were the



only ones on the tour who chose to stay in Hudson that day to see the darling little town and we both rejoiced in a fabulous dinner.

Many thanks to the organizers and to the tireless efforts of the drivers, particularly Lisa's husband, Denny, who must have logged a bazillion hours schlepping folks hither and yon to

all the beautiful local labyrinths, airports, and Trader Joes runs for off-campus supplies!

